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THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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SOME THOUGHTS ON CGIAR SUPPORT FOR

THE NON-ASSOCIATED CENTRES

(Agenda Item 13)

Objectives of the Discussion

The Committee may wish to consider this note which has been prepared by the TAC Secretariat. It should be reviewed together with CGIAR Document MT88/017: "Relationships Between Non-Associated Centres and the CGIAR". The criteria used by TAC for priority assessment and resource allocation, which might also be applied to determine eligibility of the activities of the non-associated centres for CGIAR support, are highlighted. The implications for TAC, and resource requirements for undertaking this task are briefly discussed. Finally, suggestions are made of action to be taken and procedures to be followed by TAC and the CGIAR.

TAC SECRETARIAT

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

JUNE 1988

## SOME THOUGHTS ON CGIAR SUPPORT FOR THE NON-ASSOCIATED CENTRES

### 1. Introduction

At its May 1988 meeting in Berlin, the Group agreed to consider support for those non-CGIAR international centres which work on problems related to its goal and objectives. TAC was requested to assess the quality and relevance of the activities performed by these Centres and determine their eligibility for support by the CGIAR.

A working paper prepared by the CGIAR Secretariat for the Berlin meeting suggested some criteria that might be applied in considering these institutions for association with the CGIAR 1/. The criteria comprised research as well as management and financial issues. This note elaborates on some research and research related indicators that could be used to assess eligibility of these Centres for CGIAR support. It should be read in conjunction with the CGIAR Secretariat paper. Since the exercise is likely to be quite demanding on TAC's time and resources, the implications of adding this assignment on the TAC agenda are discussed briefly.

### 2. The Goal and Programme Strategy of the CGIAR

The goal of the CGIAR is quite specific on the nature, scope and target of the System's overall effort. The Group has decided that the activities it supports should be international, research or research related, in the field of agriculture, and should contribute to increasing sustainable food production in developing countries. The main target group is the low-income people. The primary areas of research and related activities are clearly reflected in the eight programme objectives of the CGIAR 2/.

A meeting held at Bellagio in January 1986 suggested a re-definition of the CGIAR goal statement to include, inter alia, "... improving the management of natural resources....". The meeting also proposed the inclusion of trees and shrubs in Centres' work on production systems. Further, it urged for additional consideration by TAC of ways in which non-CGIAR factor-related research institutions might more effectively contribute to the goal of the CGIAR. Some donors have stressed the importance of the activities performed by the non-CGIAR Centres, and the need for closer collaboration between these institutions and the CGIAR Centres.

In its review of CGIAR priorities and future strategies TAC identified a number of gaps in the current CGIAR effort: research on tropical vegetables, aquaculture and coconuts. TAC has since made a proposal to the CGIAR on tropical vegetables and is presently working on proposals for aquaculture and coconuts. Three of the non-associated Centres namely, AVRDC, ICLARM and ICRAF have activities related to the new initiatives.

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1/ Relationships Between Non-Associated Centres and the CGIAR.

2/ CGIAR Priorities and Future Strategies (1987). FAO, Rome.

The issue of trees and shrubs was alluded to by TAC during its deliberations on sustainable agricultural production. The matter was also raised during the Group's consideration of the TAC document. Further, natural resources management was the subject of a paper presented by Dr. E. Schuh at the Berlin meeting 1/.

### 3. Scientific Criteria for Association

Sustainability issues are assuming increasing importance in the System's work. The Group has taken a political decision to consider support for those non-associated Centres which contribute to the goal and objectives of the CGIAR.

While supporting the multi-disciplinary approach and the commodity focus, TAC has given new emphasis to the importance of sustainability in the System's work. It recognizes that the necessary research will include work on soils, water, plant nutrition and protection as well as aspects of agro-forestry. TAC has advocated stronger collaboration with specialized institutions and has developed some guidelines for collaboration with non-CGIAR centres 2/. However, it considers that the CGIAR should actively support the strengthening of factor research outside the System.

The Group needs TAC's advice regarding: (a) which of the non-associated institutions, or their activities, should be supported by the CGIAR; and (b) what institutional arrangements would be necessary to ensure continued viability and cost-effectiveness of essential CGIAR activities. It may be necessary to drop, or phase down, some of the existing CGIAR activities in order to accommodate the non-associated centres. To do this properly, scientific criteria are needed to determine eligibility for association. The next step would be the assessment of the activities of those eligible institutions for scientific quality and relevance.

The criteria that need to be applied to determine eligibility for CGIAR support might include:

- (i) conformity with the CGIAR goal;
- (ii) contribution towards the realization of one or more of the CGIAR programme objectives;
- (iii) whether the activity appears in the glossary of CGIAR activities;
- (iv) whether the activity can be considered essential or desirable for CGIAR support;
- (v) whether the activity is filling an important gap (new initiative) in the array of CGIAR endeavours; and

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1/ Natural Resources and Sustainability in the Developing Countries: Meeting the Challenge with International Research.

2/ Promoting collaboration between CGIAR Centres and Other Research Institutions. TAC 42 Report. FAO, Rome (1987).

- (vi) whether the institutional structure conforms with CGIAR accepted mode(s) of operation, or provides an innovative approach.

Most of the criteria needed already exist in various documents developed by TAC and endorsed by the CGIAR. Based on the information available in the CGIAR priorities and future strategies document it should be possible to determine which of the Centres share the CGIAR goal and objectives (Annex I) and which commodities could be classified as being worthy of CGIAR support (Annex II). In order to determine which of the activities are appropriate for CGIAR support the Glossary of CGIAR Activities could be consulted (Annex III) and the process used by TAC for resource allocation according to the new procedure applied (Annex IV). Proposed terms of reference for assessing the quality and relevance of the activities performed by the non-associated institutions are attached as Annex V. The terms of reference will be supplemented with a list of specific questions for each non-associated centre.

#### 4. Implications for TAC

TAC is largely composed of individuals who are in full employment elsewhere. Most of them are in high demand and have very busy schedules. The TAC portfolio has grown as the activities supported by the CGIAR have multiplied and expanded. Various approaches have been used by the Co-Sponsors and TAC to meet the challenge and workload. Over the years, the size of the Committee has been enlarged twice. The length and frequency of TAC meetings have also increased.

The TAC Chairmen have resorted to mechanisms like standing committees, continuing sub-committees, and ad hoc working groups, to cope with particular situations. There has also been heavy reliance on consultants and other resource people. TAC has always been able to adjust its working procedures and agendas to fulfill its mandate, and would no doubt do so if the System were to be enlarged. The non-associated centres issue has both short-term and long-term implications. In this section, the short-term needs are considered.

#### Current TAC Agenda

At each CGIAR meeting new topics are added to the TAC agenda. The Committee already meets three times a year. A number of TAC Members have complained about the amount of time spent on TAC business and attempts have been made recently to reduce the length of the March and June TAC meetings. However, in order to embark on the exercise of assessing the non-associated centres it may become necessary to revert to longer meetings. There is not much scope for increasing the number of TAC meetings.

A number of activities have now become more or less routine on the TAC agenda. On average two External Programme Reviews (EPRs) are done annually. Although TAC is not responsible for commissioning External Management Reviews (EMRs), the EMR reports are considered together with those of the EPR. Plans are under way to regularize and expand cross-Centre commodity/activity reviews.

The new resource allocation process has been completed for five Centres. Three other Centres will probably be completed in June, another in October, and yet another in March 1989. This will leave CIMMYT, ICARDA and IRRI to be done in June and October 1989. Further, at the Mid-Term meeting in Berlin, the Group indicated that it would like TAC to review the annual budget requests by Centres before they are submitted to the CGIAR.

The Committee is developing policy statements for the Group on Biotechnology and Plant Genetic Resources. It has also been requested to look at the issue of Plant Quarantine and Seed Health in the CGIAR.

Two new initiatives for CGIAR support are still to be finalized, namely Aquaculture and Coconuts. Both are on the agenda of TAC 46 and are likely to come back at TAC 47. It is unlikely that the proposals will be ready for consideration by the Group before the Mid-Term Meeting in 1989.

The Committee is also developing a document on its approach to priority setting and it has not yet completed its Study of the CGIAR Centres in the Global Context. Current plans are to get this finalized before the end of the year.

Priority setting has become a continuing activity of TAC. The Committee is considering to issue a revised CGIAR priorities document by 1992. To achieve this target date, priority setting will have to become a major agenda item at most of the future meetings of TAC.

The Group appear to be in a hurry to get TAC's advice on the qualification of the non-associated centres for CGIAR support. Ten of these institutions have been suggested for review by TAC namely, AVRDC, IBSRAM, ICIPE, ICRAF, ICLARM, IFDC, IMI, INIBAP, IUFRO and ITC. If these reviews were to be done within the next two years it would require having at least two non-CGIAR Centres ready for consideration at each CGIAR meeting during 1989 and 1990. TAC would have to commission six EPRs every year - two for the CGIAR Centres and four for the non-CGIAR institutions. In addition, at least one cross-centre commodity/activity review would be done annually.

#### Working Methods and Procedures

In order to ensure that the added responsibility to TAC does not jeopardize the essential activities of TAC, the Committee would have to change its working methods. It may also become necessary to cancel some activities such as inter-Centre commodity/activity reviews and maybe postpone the priority setting exercise until a decision is taken on the future scope and size of the CGIAR.

The TAC Chairman is already considering to establish a standing committee for each of the main areas of concern to TAC such as Priority Setting, Resource Allocation and External Reviews. If such sub-committees are established, the one dealing with external reviews in consultation with the one on priority setting could develop guidelines, suggest a procedure, and work out a timeframe, for the assessment of the programmes of the non-CGIAR Centres. The possibility of creating a Special Task Force for such reviews might be considered. The Task Force would work closely with, and report to, TAC.

### Size and Composition of TAC

In order to address adequately those issues related to factor research, fisheries, forestry, plantation crops and sustainability, it would be desirable to have more disciplinary expertise on TAC. Although the size of TAC is probably already too big, the Co-Sponsors might consider adding up to a maximum of four more TAC Members. This could be done initially as a temporary measure (as special consultants to TAC) to facilitate the review of the non-associated Centres.

### Capacity of the TAC Secretariat

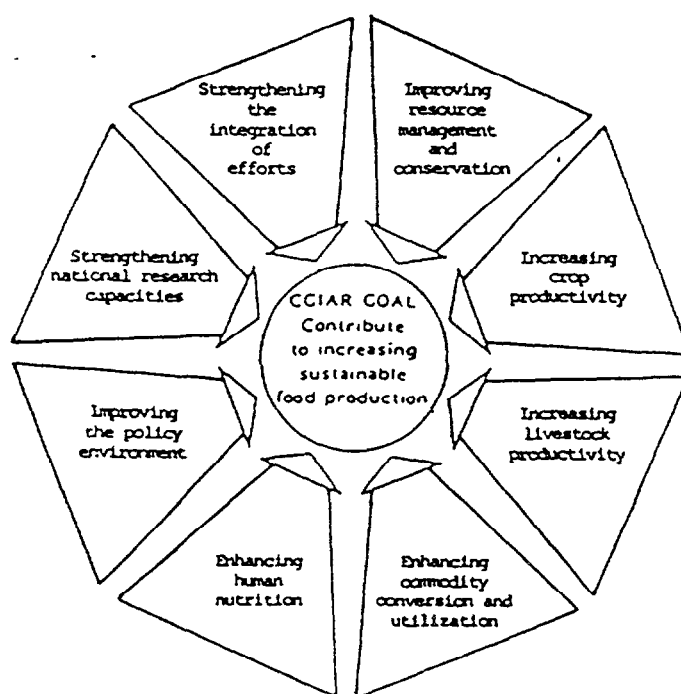
The TAC Secretariat as currently constituted is already quite over-stretched. A review of the Secretariat is being planned. Additional strength would become necessary to enable the Secretariat to organize and implement the reviews of the non-associated Centres. Two options are proposed. One would be to appoint a special team of resource people to work in close consultation with the TAC Secretariat to carry out strategic analyses of these institutions. The other would be to have additional staff assigned to the Secretariat. These could be individuals detailed to the TAC Secretariat by donors.

### Resources

The Co-Sponsors share the expenses of the operations of TAC and its Secretariat. In addition FAO provides offices and logistical support to the TAC Secretariat. An expanded TAC would definitely require additional resources for travel and honoraria expenses. To strengthen the scientific capacity of the TAC Secretariat would also require additional funds for staff travel, salaries and benefits. FAO would also have to be consulted to determine whether it could provide more office space.

The cost of the reviews would comprise travel expenses and honoraria for consultants, and printing charges. Funds for this would have to come either from the Special Activities Account of the CGIAR, or from special donations. External Programme Reviews of the CGIAR Centres cost on average about US\$ 150,000 per Centre. It is estimated that six of the non-associated Centres would require US\$ 100,000 each for the review, while the remaining four would each need US\$ 50,000. It would therefore be necessary to secure US\$ 800,000 for the programme reviews of the non-associated centres.

The Goal and Objectives of the CGIAR



# Indicators for Priority Assessment in Commodity Review

## CATEGORY I: Relevance of contribution to CGIAR goal

### Importance of the commodity in the diet

- calorie contribution
- protein contribution
- additional nutritional aspects (fats, vitamins, minerals, etc.)
- utilization aspects (storage, transportability, conversion, etc.)

### Importance of the commodity in the production system

- value of production (share in global/regional production)
- contribution to sustainability
- multiple purposes (livestock feed, energy, by-products)
- area harvested
- agroecological suitability

### Relevance to target groups

- income/employment generation
- nutritional factors

### Future trends in demand availability

- self-sufficiency (macro-level)
- food security (micro-level)

## CATEGORY II: Research productivity

### Researchability

- evidence that progress in production or productivity of a commodity is constrained by lack of knowledge and/or technology

### Research opportunities \*

- extent of genetic diversity
- yield levels, yield trends and potential gains
- yield stability and defense of achieved gains
- potential agroecological amplitude
- unexploited areas for research
- scope of application of potential results
- estimated returns to proposed research

### Research history

- current knowledge base
- past gains/failures

### Potential for breakthrough

- technologies in the pipeline
- emerging knowledge from basic research

### Time frame

## CATEGORY III: Efficiency of CG System in undertaking research

### International character of the commodity or research problem

- the need for a supra-national research effort
- the transferability of the potential technology across regions, national boundaries and cultural areas

### Comparative advantage of the CG System with respect to research on the commodity

- need for a concentrated interdisciplinary research thrust
- need for research at the strategic or applied levels
- need for continuity and stability of effort
- need for access to characterized germplasm

### Complementarity of efforts with other members of global system

- strength of national research systems
- activities of other agencies and research organizations
- linkages with basic research institutions
- potential for institutional cooperation/collaboration

### Cost effectiveness

- current resource allocation within the CG System
- level of resources allocated to commodity research by others
- returns to past investment
- expected payoff to same or increased efforts



List of Candidate Activities

1. Water Management Research
2. Soil Management & Conservation Research
3. Agroclimatology Research
4. Germplasm
  - a) Research on conservation and diversity
  - b) Collection
  - c) Conservation, characterization and documentation
  - d) Enhancement
  - e) Plant breeding/improvement
  - f) International trials (distribution & exchange of breeding material)
5. Seed Production
6. Crop Systems Research
7. Livestock Systems Research
8. Crop-Livestock Systems Research
9. Plant Protection Research
10. Plant Nutrition Research
11. Machinery Research and Development
12. Livestock Nutrition Research
13. Livestock Reproduction Research
14. Livestock Disease Research
15. Human Resource Enhancement
  - a) Specialized courses (short-term)
  - b) Visiting scientists/fellows
  - c) Post-doctoral programs
  - d) Degree-related
16. Conferences and Seminars
17. Documentation and Dissemination
18. Research on Approaches, Concepts, Methodologies and Procedures
19. Counselling and Advising NARS
20. Technical Assistance
21. Coordination of Networks
22. Economic and Social Analysis at Micro-Level
23. Market Analysis
24. Policy Analysis
25. Nutrition and Consumption Analysis
26. Research on Research
27. Exploratory Research
28. Conversion and Utilization Research
29. Agroforestry

# The Process of Longer-Term Budget Evaluation

Step I: Is an activity a candidate for CG support?

Questions:

1. Is it research or research related? No [ ] -> Inappropriate.  
Yes [ ]
2. Is it international in character? No [ ] -> Inappropriate.  
Yes [ ]
3. Is it a necessary component of a CG program? No [ ] -> Inappropriate.  
Yes [ ] = Candidate for CG Support.

Step II: Is it essential or desirable? Use indicators to decide.

(Clearly TAC judgement required here.)

Essential

Desirable

Step III: What is the appropriate scale? (See indicators. Again, TAC judgement required especially between activities if there is a budget constraint.)

Scale

Scale

Step IV: Does the center presently have the capacity to undertake the activity at the needed scale?

Yes [ ] -> Approve.

No [ ]      What additional resources are needed?  
Should additions be recommended?

Proposed Terms of Reference

1. Review the importance and relevance of the problems addressed by (name of institution)\* in the context of the central goal and objectives of the CGIAR.
2. Obtain a thorough understanding of the operational mandate, objectives and programmes of (name of institution) to determine the extent to which these are in line with the objectives of the Group and with the criteria established by TAC for determining priorities and new initiatives for support by the CGIAR.
3. Review the governance, organization and mode of operation of (name of institution), including its cooperation with the research programmes of developing country institutions and with the CGIAR Centres and establish how these relate to the established practices of the CGIAR Centres.
4. Ascertain the extent to which (name of institution) activities can complement or support ongoing activities in the same area and related fields at national and international level, including present activities by the CGIAR Centres and other international institutions, and assess the benefits which can be derived from the inclusion of (name of institution) in the CGIAR System.
5. Assess the extent to which (name of institution) has, or could, play a rôle in expanding the research capacity of developing countries.
6. On the basis of the above, make recommendations to TAC as to the suitability, or otherwise, of (name of institution) for full or partial support by the CGIAR. If partial support is recommended, indicate those parts of the programme of the centre which should be supported.

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(\*) AVRDC, IBSRAM, ICIPE, ICRAF, ICLARM, IFDC, IIMI, INIBAP, IUFRO, ITC.